

from an unpublished essay by Leila Sujir

The Viewer as Lover: Intimate Looks at "The Bloom of Matter"

The drawings in "The Bloom of Matter" bring out the interconnections of all things: matter itself blooms and is alive. What Wieland proposes in her representations within the drawings is an ecological (or anti-humanist) model of the universe rather than a humanist one.

The drawings create an intimacy with the viewer both because of their scale (from four inches to fifteen inches) and their surface (like luminous projections, as though light were projected onto paper, the images emerge, disappear and reappear). One must literally be close to the drawings, in order for the drawings to emerge. With this the movement of the eye as it travels around the transparent images of plant life, people, goddesses and places - the drawings become cinematic.

Wieland talking about the drawings recalls, "I was working with the paper to create a luminosity. I found the drawings in the paper. By looking, I found the drawings." The viewer too, must look, for the drawings to emerge, and thus she activates our seeing. Looking becomes bliss.

In terms of influences on the drawings, "Tiepolo's work," Wieland recalls, "was an inspiration along with a trip to the Arctic where I discovered something about the quality of light. I was interested in regional light - a region's light in the Maritimes, the Arctic, northern Ontario..."

Within the drawings, there is a focus on the sensual and the sexual: matter blooms, things touch and grow out of one another, angels (not fairies - note the wings) and goddesses preside, the mythical comes together with the particular. A province is born, "The Birth of New Foundland." The Roman goddess of love is located in northern Ontario, "The Venus of Kapuskasing." Chopin comes to an Ontario lake, "Chopin with other Polish Patriots at Lake Skootamatta," and flowers are born, "The Birth Place of Snap Dragons." In these drawings, the sexual is extended out not only to an other, a lover, but to all matter, which blooms. Sex - regeneration, creation - brings in birth and death, love and loss. A language of the emotions is represented within the powerful episodic moments or glimpses showing how things grow, how things are born, and how things disappear and die. In "The Death of Love," Wieland observed a pig's head, which she had gotten from the market. The drawing shows

the pig, a big bruise on its head from a death blow, blood at the corners of its mouth, and, life against death, a daffodil in its mouth. This is not a hedonistic representation of emotion, but rather, a powerful look at the stuff, the matter - matter in a cycle of sex, birth and death.

The drawings themselves are gifts, both for and from Wieland. She says about them, "They came of their own will. They just came one day and two years later, it ended. They were for me and they healed me." And they are extended out from her, to the viewer, as a gift for and from love.

All quotations are from an interview with Joyce Wieland on August 15, 1986, in Toronto.

List of Works in The Bloom of Matter - Joyce Wieland
Coloured Drawing Exhibit

Venus of Kapuskasing, The , 1977
Coloured Pencil
8 3/4 x 5 3/4 in.

Visit to Lawren Harris' Ice Berg Painting, 1978
Coloured Pencil
8 1/4 x 11 3/8 in.

My Dream as a Young Girl Fulfilled Today, 1978
Coloured Pencil
9 x 10 1/4 in.

Women in Solution, 1979
Coloured Pencil
8 3/4 x 11 1/2 in.

Women and Wolves, 1979
Coloured Pencil
9 3/4 x 14 1/4 in.

Giantess Falls in the Village, 1979
Coloured Pencils
8 3/4 x 8 3/4 in.

Bloom of Lovers, The , 1979
Coloured Pencil
14 1/2 x 20 1/2 in.

Nourishing Light, 1979
Coloured Pencil
11 1/2 x 9 in.

Last Day in the Land of Dreams, 1979
Coloured Pencil
9 1/2 x 9 1/2 in.

Death from Drowning, 1979
Coloured Pencil
8 5/8 x 8 1/2 in.

All is Lost, 1979
Coloured Pencil
11 x 13 in.

Morning Vision, 1979
Coloured Pencil
7 x 7 in.

She Speaks Above Reason, 1979
Coloured Pencil
6 1/4 x 6 1/4 in.

Goddess of the Deer, 1979
Coloured Pencil
10 3/8 x 13 3/4 in.

Forced from the Field, 1979

Coloured Pencil

13½ x 11 ¼ in.

Birth Place of Snap Dragons, 1979

Coloured Pencil

10 ½ x 13 ¼ in.

Unveiling the Sacred Pool, 1980

Coloured Pencil

9 5/8 x 13 5/8 in.

Death of Love, 1980

Coloured Pencil

14 x 22 7/8 in.

Last Fall, 1980

Coloured Pencil

12 x 13¼ in.

Blood in the Storm, 1980

Coloured Pencil

6 ¾ x 6 ¾ in.

Birth of New Foundland, 1980

Coloured Pencil

8¼ x 8¼ in.

Bloom of Matter 'Spring', 1980

Coloured Pencil

14¼ x 22 ¾ in.

Victory of Venus, 1981

Coloured Pencil

16½ x 21 in.

Goddess on the Earth , Sea and Air, 1981

Coloured Pencil

15 ¾ x 20¼ in.

One Above Waits for Those Below, The, 1981

Coloured Pencil

15½ x 20 in.

Chopin with other Polish Patriots at Lake Skootamata, 1981

Coloured Pencil

8½ x 12 ¼ in.

Beloved Rose, 1981

Coloured Pencil

13¼ x 19 ¾ in.